

Warden Message
U.S. Embassy Asuncion
April 6, 2011

Outbreak of Dengue Fever in Paraguay

This Warden Message is being issued to advise American citizens traveling to and residing in Paraguay of an outbreak of Dengue Fever. Dengue is caused by any one of four related viruses transmitted by mosquitoes. There are no vaccines or medications to prevent infection with dengue, and the most effective protective measure is to avoid mosquito bites. Information about Dengue prevention and treatment, including the safe use of insect repellants, is available through the [Centers for Disease Control website](#).

The best preventive measure is to eliminate the places where mosquitoes lay eggs, primarily artificial containers that hold water. Items that collect rainwater or store water (e.g., plastic containers, bird baths, buckets, or used automobile tires) should be covered or properly discarded. Pet water dishes and vases with fresh flowers should be emptied and cleaned at least once a week. This will eliminate mosquito eggs and larvae and reduce the number of mosquitoes present in these areas. Using air conditioning or window and door screens reduces the risk of mosquitoes coming indoors. Proper application of mosquito repellents containing 20% to 30% DEET as the active ingredient on exposed skin and clothing decreases the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are most active during the early morning, several hours after daybreak, and in the late afternoon several hours before sunset, so avoiding outdoor activity at these times will also aid in prevention.

Symptoms and What to Do If You Think You Have Dengue from the [CDC's Dengue Homepage](#).

The principal symptoms of dengue are:

- High fever and at least two of the following:
 - Severe headache
 - Severe eye pain (behind eyes)
 - Joint pain
 - Muscle and/or bone pain
 - Rash
 - Mild bleeding manifestation (e.g., nose or gum bleed, petechiae, or easy bruising)
 - Low white cell count

Generally, younger children and those with their first dengue infection have a milder illness than older children and adults.

Persons who experience the symptoms of dengue should advise their health care provider.

Persons experiencing dengue symptoms should also watch for warning signs as temperature declines three to seven days after symptoms began. Go IMMEDIATELY to an emergency room or the closest health care provider if any of the following warning signs appear:

- Severe abdominal pain or persistent vomiting
- Red spots or patches on the skin
- Bleeding from nose or gums
- Vomiting blood
- Black, tarry stools (feces, excrement)
- Drowsiness or irritability
- Pale, cold, or clammy skin
- Difficulty breathing

Dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) is characterized by a fever that lasts from two to seven days, with general signs and symptoms consistent with dengue fever. When the fever declines, warning signs may develop. This marks the beginning of a 24 to 48 hour period when the smallest blood vessels (capillaries) become excessively permeable (“leaky”), allowing the fluid component to escape from the blood vessels into the peritoneum (causing ascites) and pleural cavity (leading to pleural effusions). This may lead to failure of the circulatory system and shock, and possibly death without prompt, appropriate treatment. In addition, the patient with DHF has a low platelet count and hemorrhagic manifestations, tendency to bruise easily or have other types of skin hemorrhages, bleeding nose or gums, and possibly internal bleeding.

Treatment (From the [CDC Traveler's Health site](#)):

There is no specific medication for treatment of dengue. Persons who think they have dengue should use pain relievers with acetaminophen- known locally as *Paracetamol* - and avoid those containing ibuprofen, Naproxen, aspirin, or aspirin containing drugs. They should also rest, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and avoid mosquito bites while febrile.

As with dengue, there is no specific medication for DHF. If a clinical diagnosis is made early, a health care provider can effectively treat DHF using fluid replacement therapy. Adequately management of DHF generally requires hospitalization.

For answers to frequently asked questions about dengue, go to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention dengue page](#).

Para más información en castellano sobre el dengue, favor de consultar el sitio de internet del [Ministerio de Salud](#).

American citizens in Paraguay are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion through the [State Department's travel registration website](#).

U.S. Embassy Asuncion contact information:

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Fax: 595-21-228-603

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Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the U.S. Embassy's website and the U.S. Department of State's, [Bureau of Consular Affairs' website](#), where the current Worldwide Caution, Country Specific Information, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. The U.S. Embassy also encourages U.S. citizens to review "[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)," which includes valuable security information for those both living and traveling abroad. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.